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Carole
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Winter 1983

Food News for Consumers

United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service:

- Inspects and analyzes domestic and imported meat, poultry, and meat and poultry food products;
- Establishes standards and approves recipes and labels for processed meat and poultry products; and
- Monitors the meat and poultry industries for violations of inspection laws.

USDA's 1983 Children's Poster Contest Begins in February

For the third year, the Food Safety and Inspection Service is sponsoring a national food safety poster contest for school children all across the country.

In February, special instructional kits will be mailed to teachers in some 72,000 public and private elementary schools. This year, the teachers' kits will cover basic food safety tips for consumers, such as how to shop and store foods safely. The kits also will include information on the importance of reading food labels.

After teachers cover the food safety materials with their classes (grades 1-6), the kids will sit down with scissors, posters, paints and paper to show what they've learned. Students are encouraged to view their posters as "ads" for good food safety habits. They are also told that their art should be bright and bold, with the message kept simple.

Judging is by an impartial panel with winners to be announced in May. The winners from the three age categories judged and their teachers each will receive \$200 U.S. Saving Bonds. The winners and their parents will also receive a trip to Washington, D.C., for the awards ceremony. Children of USDA employees are not eligible to enter.

Guests You Don't Want at the Party

No host or hostess planning a party wants any of the three major types of bacterial food poisoning as drop-in guests. Yet these bacteria -- Staphylococcus aureus, Salmonella and Clostridium perfringens -- are around us all the time, waiting for conditions ideal for their growth.

Such conditions often occur in the flurry of preparing food for special occasions. So, to prevent bacterial food poisoning from affecting you, your family or guests, remember:

--Staph loves a buffet. Leaving foods over-long at room temperature is the primary cause of staph infection. Never leave food out more than two hours, and make sure your refrigerator is cooling to at least 40° F.

--Salmonella strikes meat and poultry products, milk, eggs and fish. It loves these foods raw and undercooked. High cooking temperatures (150° F and over) and quick serving can protect food from salmonella.

Salmonella lives in the intestinal tract of humans and animals and is carried in wastes, so strict kitchen cleanliness is vital. Everything that touches food -- hands, utensils, countertops -- should be washed in hot soapy water before handling food again. This prevents cross-contamination between different foods, as well as between raw and cooked foods.

--Perfringens, the "cafeteria germ," attacks food served in quantity and left to stand for long periods at room temperature. Meat, poultry and high-protein foods attract perfringens bacteria.

To beat perfringens, avoid serving foods in huge containers and don't leave it out over two hours. Likewise, when refrigerating large portions of food, divide them into smaller dishes so they can reach safe, lower temperatures quickly.

For further information see the fact sheet, "Food-Borne Bacterial Poisoning," (FSIS-9) and the FSIS News Feature, "Guests You Don't Want at the Party."

Sticky Issues in Labeling

How do you label a pizza containing both cheese and cheese substitutes? Which cut of pork must be used in "Canadian Style Bacon"?

For meat and poultry industry representatives, nutritionists, medical personnel and consumer groups who need to know, these and some 50 other labeling questions are answered in a group of FSIS policy memos now available from: FSIS Printing and Distribution Section, USDA, Room 0151-S, Washington, D.C. 20250. The memos date from May 1, 1980, through August 31, 1982.

The memos, many written in response to industry requests for clarification, contain the practical, day-to-day interpretation of more formal USDA rules and regulations. They cover a wide variety of technical labeling issues and serve as a guide to meat and poultry processors on current FSIS policy.

Under the authority of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, FSIS must approve the labeling of all federally-inspected meat and poultry products.

A complete list of the labeling policy memos appears in the September 27, 1982, *Federal Register*, available in public libraries.

USDA Proposes Changes in Cured Pork Products

FSIS has proposed regulating the amount of added water in cured pork products by requiring specified levels of protein. The proposal would establish minimum protein requirements for the full range of cured pork products now being marketed. These protein requirements would be tied to the amount of added water remaining in a product at the time the consumer buys it.

Water is added to pork products as a curing solution or pickle. This generally consists of a mixture of salt and nitrite dissolved in water. Curing serves to preserve the meat and inhibits the growth of food poisoning organisms. It also imparts the traditional flavor and color to these products.

Under the proposal, the labeling categories for cured pork products would not change from those used now. For example, under existing regulations a product labeled "Ham" may contain no added water, whereas a product labeled "Ham--Water Added" may contain up to 10 percent added water. Products labeled in this manner will still be marketed, provided they meet minimum protein criteria.

Each class of pork product would have a different minimum protein requirement. Because the relative protein levels decrease as more water is added, a minimum protein requirement would establish an approximate level of maximum added



water. Among the pork products that would be affected by this proposal are cooked ham, loin and shoulder; uncooked cured ham and loin; and chopped, pressed and spiced ham.

Anyone who wishes to comment on the proposal should send their comments by March 10, 1983, to FSIS Hearing Clerk, USDA, Room 2637-S, Washington, D.C. 20250. The proposal was published in the November 10, 1982, Federal Register, available in most public libraries. A press release (#1315-82) and a background paper are available.

USDA Residue Avoidance Program Underway

Since Secretary Block inaugurated USDA's new Residue Avoidance Program last April, the Extension Service has awarded \$1.5 million for 38 research projects to help farmers avoid contamination of their animals and thereby prevent residues of harmful drugs and chemicals in meat and poultry sold to consumers.

The projects, to be conducted primarily by researchers from land-grant universities, include work with production of all types of birds and livestock raised for food. Many of the projects include studies of farm management controls that help prevent contamination of animals, as well as educational programs to help farmers avoid residues.

* * * * *

As part of the Residue Avoidance Program, USDA and the National Broiler Council, which represents the broiler chicken industry, entered into a residue avoidance agreement that serves as a model for agreements with individual companies. Under the agreement, when a company's residue testing suggests that a problem may be present, it will inform USDA so that appropriate preventive actions can be instituted by the company and USDA. By sharing information, USDA and the poultry industry can better ensure the safety and wholesomeness of poultry reaching American consumers.

The residue agreement reflects the poultry industry's demonstrated interest in residue avoidance. Nearly 100 percent of the nation's broilers are produced by firms with residue control programs, which include residue testing of feed and birds prior to slaughter. In this way, problems can be identified and corrected well before poultry enters consumer channels.

Food News for Consumers for Sale in 1983

Beginning with this issue, "Food News for Consumers" is for sale through the Government Printing Office. The cost of a year's subscription -- four issues -- is \$7.00 for domestic and \$8.75 for foreign subscribers.

Each issue of "Food News for Consumers" keys you into USDA's vast network of food and nutrition information. It is the only newsletter that carries important current information from agencies in USDA involved in food, nutrition and consumer issues.

Each issue covers up-to-date information on such items as meat and poultry inspection, food assistance programs, meat grading, agricultural research and USDA's food and nutrition policies.

To subscribe to "Food News for Consumers" just fill out the form on the back page of the newsletter.

What to do about Frozen Canned Goods



When blizzards threaten, many people head for the grocery store to stock up on extra food -- especially canned goods. And these canned goods may be stored in attics, basements and other places with limited heating. When the temperature drops, they become frozen.

There is no safety problem if a can is accidentally frozen. However, upon freezing, the contents of the can will expand or "bulge." Sometimes, a can's seams will be damaged and after thawing the contents will leak out. If this happens, throw the can out because the food could be unsafe to eat.

The general rule is that frozen canned foods should be thawed gradually in as dry an atmosphere as possible to prevent "sweating" and rusting. After thawing, "all-meat" or "all-poultry" products -- such as, canned ham and boned chicken -- should show no difference in color or appearance. If they appear to be bad, throw them out. Don't taste food that looks or smells suspicious. The texture of other canned products -- such as meat and poultry with vegetables, noodles, etc. -- may change after thawing. Although "mushy," they are still safe to eat.

USDA Expands Testing for Antibiotics

USDA inspectors can now use a rapid analytical test to check meat and poultry for traces of antibiotic residues. This represents an expansion of the Swab Test on Premises (STOP) Program which has been used for dairy cows since 1979.

In the STOP program, inspectors check all suspect carcasses at the plant. Carcasses found free of antibiotic residues can move into commerce without delay. When STOP reveals antibiotics, however, inspectors collect tissue samples and send them to the laboratory for further testing. Carcasses are held at the plant for the one-to-two weeks it takes for the inspector to receive test results. If violative levels of antibiotics are confirmed in the laboratory, carcasses are condemned.

Since 1979 when the STOP program began, antibiotic residue violations for cows dropped from 3.7 percent in 1978 to 0.6 percent in 1981. For most other meat and poultry, violations range from 0.2 to 2.7 percent.

For further information see press release No. 1119-82, Sept. 20, 1982, "USDA Expands Testing for Antibiotics at the Slaughterhouse" and FSIS Facts: The National Residue Program," FSIS-19.

Court Upholds USDA's Meat Import Authority

A federal court recently upheld USDA's authority to restrict foreign meat and poultry plants from exporting products to the United States when USDA cannot adequately ensure their safety or wholesomeness. The court ruling is significant because it affirms USDA's authority to take preventive measures to protect U.S. consumers from unsound imports. It was the first court action challenging USDA's authority in this area.

The suit was brought by Canadera Industrial S.A., a Costa Rican beef exporter. On October 1, USDA withdrew the plant's eligibility to import beef into the United States because its principal stockholder and chairman of the board, Dr. Miguel Rodriguez, was indicted by a Federal grand jury for violating the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

In its argument, Canadera contended that USDA acted arbitrarily and capriciously and that it violated the due process clause of the Constitution by failing to provide notice and a hearing before it removed the plant from

the list of approved exporters. USDA considered its action warranted based on Dr. Rodriguez's indictment, questions about the wholesomeness and safety of Ganadera's product and notice from the Costa Rican government that it had no authority to prevent the plant from exporting to the United States.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia concluded that USDA acted appropriately. The court said the move was consistent with the intent of the federal inspection law, which requires foreign countries exporting to the United States to conduct inspection "at least equal to" U.S. inspection.

USDA has since allowed the company to resume exports to the United States because Rodriguez has removed himself from management of the company.

Other FSIS News



USDA adopts measures to control rejected meat and poultry imports. Press Release #1006-82 (8-19-82).

USDA changes ingredient requirements for some sausage. Press Release #1007-82 (8-19-82).

School bells sound the call for packing lunches again. News Feature #1131-82 (9-22-82).

USDA announces recall of dried beef in California, New Jersey. Press Release #1222-82 (10-14-82).

Cooked corned beef recalled in New Jersey, Pennsylvania. Press Release #1230-82 (10-15-82).

USDA announces recall of chili product in Texas, Louisiana. Press Release #1223-82 (10-15-82).

USDA announces recall of Hygrade Ballpark Franks. Press Release #1281-82 (10-29-82).

Hygrade cancels recall of Ballpark Franks. Press Release #1291-82 (11-3-82).

USDA proposal clarifies rules on packaging materials. Press Release #1311-82 (11-9-82).

Keep food safe during Hanukkah, too. News Feature #1408-82 (12-2-82).

How to Obtain Free Copies

Single free copies of press releases, *Federal Register* reprints, studies, fact sheets, and publications mentioned in the FSIS section of this newsletter are available from FSIS Public Awareness, Room 1163-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Phone: (202) 447-9351.

Who can Answer Your Questions

If you have a question or a problem with the safety or wholesomeness of a meat or poultry product, or the truthfulness of its labeling, contact FSIS Consumer Inquiries, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 472-4485.

Where to Send Comments

Send your comments on proposals in the FSIS section to: Regulations Coordination Division, Room 2637-S, FSIS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. Usually two copies are requested. Be sure to identify the proposal you are commenting on by referring to the title of informal proposals or, for formal proposals, the date of publication in the *Federal Register*.

USDA's Agricultural Research Service:

- Conducts research to fulfill the diverse needs of agricultural users -from farmers to consumers -in the areas of:
 - Crop and animal production, protection, processing, and distribution;
 - Food safety and quality; and
 - Natural resources conservation.

New Rice Plant Provides More Protein



USDA scientists have created a new rice plant that produces 10 percent more protein than other rice plants. The new plant also provides more complete protein since it contains more lysine, an essential amino acid, than ordinary rice. Rice and other grains are usually low in lysine, a condition that limits their overall nutritional value.

Using an innovative culturing process, the scientists put selected cells with biochemical potential for improved seed protein in test tubes. The cells then were treated with plant growth hormones and special nutrients. When the test tube cells grew into plants, they were transferred to pots of soil and later planted in a field.

This new rice plant will now be cross-bred with popular varieties of rice in an effort to transfer the improved protein content. Scientists also hope that this successful experiment could lead to improvements in other crops, especially when such work is combined with genetic engineering techniques.

Hold the Spinach-Pass the Amaranth

A staple crop for ancient Aztec and Mayan civilizations just might become an important crop again -- this time for modern man. Amaranth, largely forgotten since the 16th century, potentially could provide a plentiful and nutritious source of food as a vegetable and as a grain, according to USDA agronomists.

The plant contains large amounts of high quality protein and minerals essential for good health. Amaranth grain has been compared to a protein factory, providing a better balance of amino acids than corn, wheat, rice or other widely-used grains. Its leaves, which taste like spinach when cooked, contain high levels of leaf protein.

What further excites many agronomists about this plant's potential is its ability to flourish in mid-summer heat, yielding up to three crops per season. Its rich genetic traits also make it a prime candidate for improvement through plant breeding. This could raise its already high protein levels.

Agronomists hope to discover -- or rediscover -- many such plants to provide diverse agricultural systems that prove less vulnerable to plant disease and insect epidemics than large, single crop systems.

USDA Opens Research Center for Diet and Aging

A diet that provides adequate nutrition for an energetic young person might not meet the needs of an older adult who eats less. Age-related changes in human metabolism and body composition may increase the amounts of some vitamins and minerals necessary to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. Conversely, other dietary factors may hasten the development of chronic degenerative diseases, accelerating the deterioration of physical and mental capabilities.

Exploring this association between diet and aging is the central mission of USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, which was dedicated by Secretary of Agriculture John Block last November. Adjacent to Tufts University in Boston, the center is one of five USDA nutrition research laboratories, but the only one to focus on aging.

Among the many projects being pursued by researchers at the center are investigations into the protein needs of the aged, the prevention of osteoporosis (loss of bone calcium) through improved nutrition and the nutritional status of elderly men and women. This last study involves a nutritional survey of 1600 men and women in the Boston area between the ages of 60 and 100.

The goal of the center is to determine the optimal diet that will contribute to health and vigor over the entire human lifespan.

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service:

- Maintains USDA's Nutrient Data Bank;
- Conducts the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey;
- Monitors nutrient content of the U.S. food supply;
- Provides nutrition guidelines for education and action programs;
- Collects and disseminates food and nutrition materials; and
- Conducts nutrition education research.

Study Shows Preheating Ovens is a Waste of Energy

Most recipes for oven-cooked foods traditionally have called for using a preheated oven, long assumed necessary for such foods as casseroles, delicate egg dishes and cakes.

But a recent USDA study may change all that. Using a wide selection of items usually cooked in preheated ovens, researchers at HNIS' Consumer Nutrition Division laboratory found that preheating ovens is not essential for food quality and may be a waste of energy.

In the study USDA found few significant differences in the quality or size of certain kinds of muffins, pies, cakes, casseroles, souffles and meat loaves cooked in different types of preheated and non-preheated ovens. And although products in non-preheated ovens took about 5 minutes longer to cook, about 10 percent less energy was used overall.

Fresh Foods Still Predominate

Consumers spend just over half of each food dollar on fresh and unprocessed products, while the rest goes for frozen and canned goods, cereals, soft drinks and other convenience foods, according to a recent USDA food consumption survey.

Households in the United States use 55 percent of their food money for "nonconvenience" foods and get in return 60 percent more of their protein, fat, calcium, phosphorus, riboflavin, vitamin B-6 and vitamin B-12 from these foods. Convenience foods, however, provide Americans with more carbohydrate, thiamin, niacin and vitamin C than do nonconvenience foods.

Nutritionally, households that used more of their food dollars for convenience foods did not fare quite as well as nonconvenience food shoppers. As the



share of the dollar for convenience foods increased, the adequacy of diets decreased slightly in calories and in 14 of 17 nutrients studied. Nutrients not adversely affected by the use of convenience foods were calcium, vitamin A and carbohydrate.

Food Consumed Varies with Locale and Income

Whether you live in the city or the country affects the type of food you eat, according to a USDA survey. People who live in cities eat more meat, poultry and fish, as well as vegetables, fruits and juices. Those who live in the country consume more foods made with flour, cereals, fats and sugar -- ingredients used for much home cooking.

The same survey also showed that persons with higher incomes eat more bakery goods and drink more milk, milk products and other beverages. Those in lower income brackets eat more flour, cereals and eggs.

The results of this survey have been printed in the report "Food Consumption: Households in the United States, Spring 1977, Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78, Report No. 1." It can be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Refer to the publication number 001-000-04293-9.

Reports for each of four regions of the United States are also available, at \$8.50 each: Northeast, Report No. 2, 001-000-04294-7; North Central, Report No. 3, 001-000-04295-5; South, Report No. 4, 001-000-04301-3; and West, Report No. 5, 001-000-04302-1.

Fat Increases in Diets

Today's national food supply contains 31 percent more fat than did the food supply available to our parents and grandparents in 1910. Increased consumption of vegetable fats, particularly salad and cooking oils and shortening, accounted for the increase. Nonetheless, animal fats continue to account for the largest proportion of total fat in diets, although their share has declined since 1910.

In a briefer time frame, since the late 1960's, dietary increases ranging from 1 to 12 percent occurred in levels of food energy, fat, carbohydrate, iron, vitamin A, thiamin, niacin, vitamin B-6 and ascorbic acid. Meanwhile, decreases of 3 to 6 percent were noted for vitamin B-12, magnesium, phosphorus and calcium.

More information on trends for these nutrients can be found in the article, "Nutrient Content of the National Food Supply, 1981," National Food Review, Winter 1983.

Nutrient Content of Baked Products Improves

Many of today's baked products have improved in nutrient content because of the use of enriched flour and whole grain products, according to an article in the July issue of Cereal Foods World by USDA nutritionists. The nutritionists studied protein, carbohydrate, fat, ash, water and mineral content for a wide variety of baked products.

Among their findings were that corn tortillas and taco shells are good sources of calcium because they are made with corn soaked in lime water. Since taco shells are fried, they are higher in fat and lower in moisture than tortillas.



English muffins made with whole wheat flour are higher in protein, and muffins with raisins are higher in potassium than plain English muffins. In addition, yeast-leavened and cake doughnuts are similar in many nutrients, but the yeast-leavened products are higher in protein and slightly lower in fat. Cake doughnuts, however, are higher in phosphorus.

For more information, see *Cereal Foods World*, "Proximate and Mineral Content of Selected Baked Products," Vol. 27, No. 7, July 1972.

School Feeding Programs Make Important Diet Contributions

School breakfast and lunch programs are important sources of nutrition for many children and teenagers, according to a report by University of North Carolina researchers.

The research team found that federally-subsidized school meals boosted the daily intakes of calcium, iron, vitamin A and vitamin B-6 for the students participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The data was taken from USDA's Nationwide Food Consumption Survey.

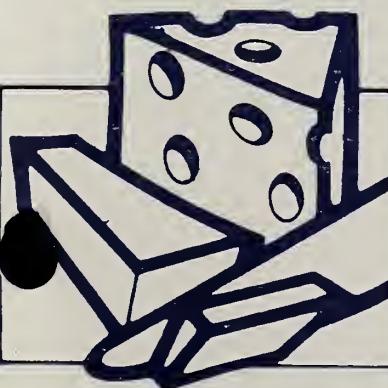
School children aged 9 to 11 consumed about 25 percent more of the recommended amounts of the above nutrients and of vitamin C and riboflavin than did children who brought lunches to school or ate non-program lunches. Their intake of vitamin A was even greater.

Teenage girls from low-income families benefit particularly from these food programs. They consumed a third more vitamin A, vitamin B-6 and iron in one day than their non-participant counterparts.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers:

- *The food stamp program;*
- *The national school lunch and school breakfast programs;*
- *The special supplemental food program for women, infants, and children (WIC); and*
- *The food distribution, child care food, summer food service and special milk programs.*

Volunteers Help Distribute Cheese and Butter to Needy



With the help of volunteers throughout the United States, the federal government has distributed \$275 million worth of surplus cheese and butter to nearly 10 million needy people in this country.

Over half of the "delivery stations" for this surplus food have been sponsored by such organizations as the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the Boy Scouts, Chambers of Commerce, unions and other civic, fraternal or religious groups. State and local governments also have played a key role in distributing the 126 million pounds of cheese and 5 million pounds of butter to those in need.

A tally of cheese orders in 1982 shows a majority of states delivering five pounds of cheese for each needy person, with some states -- Iowa, Utah, West Virginia, Indiana and the District of Columbia -- scheduled to deliver at least 15 pounds per person.

USDA recently announced plans to extend the special distribution through the end of 1983. An additional 280 million pounds of processed cheese and 75

million pounds of surplus butter have been released for the extended distribution. That brings the value of government surplus dairy products to \$1 billion in the nationwide program that began in December 1981.

FNS Cracks Down on Food Stamp Fraud

The Food and Nutrition Service and state governments are attacking food stamp fraud that has resulted in a significant loss of food stamp dollars. Human error, criminal activity and abuse by a small percentage of food stamp vendors apparently account for most of the problems with the food stamp system.

The federal government loses an estimated \$1 billion each year due to client and administrative errors. FNS has special projects underway in six states on ways to reduce such errors.

Counterfeit food stamps have become another source of loss, with almost \$1.5 million in counterfeit coupons seized in the last federal fiscal year. FNS now combats this counterfeiting with special anticounterfeit printing techniques, which include printing a "latent image" on \$10 food stamps that can be seen by looking at the stamp from a particular angle.

Food stamp recipients who violate program rules will face stiff penalties when recently passed legislation takes effect. First-time offenders will be disqualified from the program for six months, second-time offenders will be disqualified for one year, while third-time offenders will lose their benefits permanently.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service:

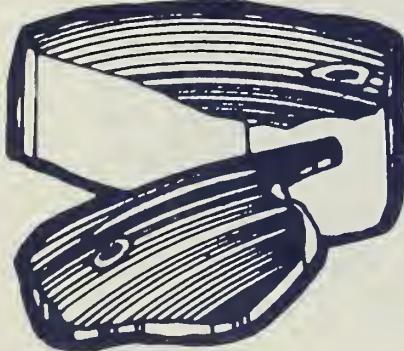
- Operates a variety of marketing programs and services—several of interest to consumers—that include:
 - Developing grades and standards for the trading of food and other farm products and carrying out grading services on request from packers and processors;
 - Inspecting egg products for wholesomeness;
 - Administering marketing orders that aid in the marketing of milk, fruits, vegetables and related specialty crops like nuts; and
 - Administering truth-in-seed labeling and other regulatory programs.

Roundtable Discussion Set on Beef Grades

USDA officials have been meeting with representatives of consumer groups and the beef industry to discuss beef grade standards in an attempt to develop a continuing dialogue between USDA and groups interested in beef grades.

The department is seeking to institute a beef grading system that adapts to changes in the marketplace and is acceptable to all groups affected by beef grades. Last year USDA proposed new beef grade standards but later withdrew the proposal because of the wide divergence of views on this issue.

For more information, contact: USDA, AMS, Room 2-M, Washington, D.C. 20250, phone (202) 447-4727.



**USDA Now
Grades
Acid-Reduced
Orange Juice**

To help avoid confusion about no-sugar-added orange juice, USDA has designated "acid-reduced frozen concentrated orange juice" as a separate product in its revised grade standards for orange juice. Reducing the acid content of frozen concentrated juice results in a sweeter tasting product and has the same effect as adding a nutritive or artificial sweetener.

The citrus industry asked USDA to treat the sweeter concentrated juice as a separate product and to develop grade requirements for it.

USDA will grade the acid-reduced juice as U.S. Grade A and U.S. Grade B, as it does for all orange juice products it regulates. However, the descriptive terms "U.S. Fancy" and "U.S. Choice" will be dropped.

**It's A Good
Time to Buy
Onions**

Can you imagine a good stew or pot roast without onions? Mild or pungent, the versatile onion is the main ingredient in many dishes and enhances hundreds more as a seasoning.

And there's no time like the present to buy onions, now that plentiful supplies from a bumper crop are on the market at attractive prices.

While adding zest to any dish from soup to salad, onions also are highly nutritious and contain many essential vitamins and minerals. Best of all, they're low in calories.

Dry onions are grown to maturity and then dried, either in the field or in artificial driers, so the skin is papery and the top is dried down. When you're food shopping, look for hard or firm onions that are dry and have small necks. They should be covered with papery outer scales and be free from green sunburn spots and other blemishes.

If you're stocking up, onions can be stored in the home for several months in a cool, dry place.



The Federated Pecan Growers' Association of the United States has asked USDA to establish a federal marketing order for pecans produced in 16 states. The group anticipates an increase in pecan production in the next several years.

**Pecan
Marketing
Order
Considered**

A marketing order is a means, backed by federal law, whereby agricultural producers and handlers can work together to solve marketing problems. The proposed order would provide for marketing research and development projects for pecans, including promotion and paid advertising. Pecan shellers would pay assessments on pecans shelled in the continental United States to finance the projects. A 14-member board, including a public member, would work with USDA in administering the program.

Forty-seven programs are in effect now for a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and specialty crops like almonds, walnuts and filberts.

USDA has scheduled public hearings during February in Dallas, Atlanta and Mobile, Ala., to consider the proposal. Details on the hearing schedule and proposal can be obtained from the Specialty Crops Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250, phone (202) 447-5697.

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